

Nov. 23, 2009

**Study Questions**  
**Messer, Goldstein, and Nagel 213-228, 234-248**

1. Why did the American Anthropological Association object to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?
2. Provide two examples of a culture understanding the concept of “human rights” differently from the way the West sees it.
3. What are human rights? Civil rights? What are “rights”? Should people have rights? If so, which ones?
4. Name some Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) concerned with rights.
5. What should be the aims of international development? What gets in the way of international development projects’ observing the human rights of its target communities?
6. Describe the evolution of human rights discourse. Why did it begin when it did? What issues became more prominent during the 1970s? (Messer, p. 323)
7. Discuss the issue of indigenous intellectual property rights (p. 331). What kinds of rights are threatened? Include White Shamans and Plastic Medicine Men in your discussion.
8. What kinds of development projects have resulted in protests about disregard of human rights, according to Messer?
9. How does “security talk” compete with “rights talk,” according to Goldstein?
10. What is your understanding of “a strict neoliberal line of privatization, flexibility, and the decentralization and diminution of the state” (p. 50, Goldstein)? What has resulted from Bolivia’s instituting these policies, according to Goldstein?
11. How do Bolivians dwelling in the poor neighborhoods of Cochabamba justify lynchings?
12. Goldstein writes that people are most concerned with defending their own “rights” to security, property, and freedom from fear (p. 51). Are these rights, in your opinion?
13. Goldstein describes how some theorists believe that the “state of exception” is a general condition of modern democratic society (pp. 52-54). Discuss.
14. Some poor urban Bolivians have come to see “human rights” as clearly bearing “the label of its foreign manufacture” (p. 63) that represent unfair advantages for criminals (p. 64). What is their argument?

15. Describe the difference between a universal language of human rights and basing human rights on cultural relativism. What *is* cultural relativism? Discuss “White Shamans and Plastic Medicine Men” with respect to this difference.
16. Nagel says that throughout U.S. history federal Indian policy has shifted between two essentially contradictory goals. What are they?
17. “I have utterly no patience with those who think more about Indian culture than they do about Indians” (p. 214). Place this statements within an ideological framework. Within a human rights framework.
18. Nagel lists four factors contributing to the reversal of federal termination policy (p. 220). What were these?
19. Nagel discusses Tarrow’s notion of “protest spread” (p. 221). Describe and illustrate.
20. Describe the atmosphere created by “the politics of civil rights” in the 1960s. List three themes (p. 223).
21. Nagel mentions The White Man’s Burden (p. 224). What kind of burden is this?
22. Compare the relationship between federally recognized Indian tribes and unrecognized tribes seeking recognition, to the relationship between various Hui communities and the Chinese state. Similarities? Differences?
23. Who, in your opinion, is “really an Indian”? Defend your criteria.
24. Should people who self-identify as Indian but who are not enrolled members of a tribe qualify for jobs intended for Indians? Discuss.
25. Compare the Red Power and Black Power movements (p. 247).

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